

# Sector Skills Councils: Working in Wales for Wales

Thematic Report 1: Technical Skills

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# 1. Introduction

In 2010 the Alliance of Sector Skills Councils (the Alliance) published a review of all Sector Skills Assessments (SSAs) produced by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) for each of the four Home Nations. This review identified a number of cross-sector skills issues; the top three issues being: the increasing need for technical skills; higher level skills, and using leadership and management skills to improve overall business performance. This report is the first of a suite of three being published by the Alliance to highlight the cross-sector skills issues in Wales across these three areas.

The purpose of this report is to make stakeholders and decision makers in Wales aware of the common technical skills needs as highlighted within Wales SSA reports; specifically those relating to the priority sectors identified in the Economic Renewal Programme.

The second report will consider higher-level skills needs, while the third will look at management and leadership skills.

## 1.1. Sector Skills Councils

SSCs are recognised by governments throughout the UK as independent, employer-led organisations which ensure that the skills system is driven by employers' needs.

SSCs exist to boost the skills and productivity of their sector's workforce. A key part of this process is the production of sectoral Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) which provides the evidence base for skills development. SSC LMI is used to influence policy and strategies, help employers identify current and future skills needs and to guide each SSC's own strategies and action plans.

The sector, or group of industries, covered by each SSC is strictly defined, but extensive collaboration does take place on cross-sector priorities. Details of each SSC can be found on the Alliance's website<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.sscalliance.org/Home-Public/SectorSkillsCouncils/SSC\\_Contacts.aspx](http://www.sscalliance.org/Home-Public/SectorSkillsCouncils/SSC_Contacts.aspx)

## 1.2. The Alliance of Sector Skills Councils

The Alliance represents, promotes and supports the work of the 22 SSCs across the UK (at the time when the SSA reports were produced LLUK was an SSC. However, since April 2011 they are no longer an SSC but some of the functions have transferred to the Learning and Skills Improvement Service. For the sake of completeness, the LLUK evidence is included within this report). Established in 2008, the Alliance is the collective voice of SSCs and has the unique role of positioning them within the UK skills system.

One of the central roles of the Alliance is to facilitate collaborative and cross-sector activity across the SSC network. This report is an example such activity.

In Wales, cross-sector research and LMI is facilitated by the Alliance's Wales LMI Group. Made up of Wales Managers and researchers, this group works to ensure that Wales-specific issues are addressed. The group takes its direction from an action plan which the Alliance annually agrees with Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills. The group meets quarterly to review progress, receive relevant reports and to give such direction as may be required.

## 1.3. Sector Skills Assessments

Currently, SSCs are required to produce an SSA report for their sector in each of the Nations on an annual basis. Described by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills as being “high quality, robust, authoritative examinations of sector skill needs across the UK”, each SSA provides details of the drivers of skills demands; current skills needs; and what lies ahead.

## 1.4. Report structure

Each SSC has contributed to the production of this report by submitting evidence of technical skills issues within their sector in Wales. Specifically, SSCs were asked to contribute a one-page summary answering three questions:

1. What are the drivers of technical skills in your sector?
2. What are the specific technical skills needs and occupations in your sector?
3. What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

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This information has been collated and analysed to provide an overall picture of the current and future needs for technical skills across the whole of the Wales workforce. Individual SSC contributions are given in Appendix A.

## 2. Why technical skills?

For many years in the UK the policy focus has been on developing higher level skills. This was exemplified by the Labour Government's policy aim that 50% of young people should go to university. The basis of this policy appears to have been the salary and productivity boost associated with Degree-level qualifications and the consequent improvement to UK Gross Domestic Product.

However, evidence<sup>2</sup> suggests that the financial returns on graduate level qualifications vary greatly depending upon the subject being studied and, that for many people, a technical route, such as an Apprenticeship scheme, could be a more appropriate entry route into their chosen career.

While a sound base of higher level skills is desirable, the result of this policy situation is that the career opportunities which available to young people of employment in skilled occupations below graduate level were not being adequately promoted. If Wales is to recover strongly from the recent recession, having a sufficient and appropriately skilled technical workforce will be crucial.

As noted in the introduction, in 2010 the Alliance carried out a review of the 2009 SSA reports to identify common cross-sectoral themes. Collectively, SSCs ranked the development of technical skills as the most important of their top three priorities.

### 2.1. Drivers of technical skills

The following drivers of technical skills in Wales were identified by SSCs:

#### Globalisation

Globalisation was highlighted as a key driver of technical skills needs by six SSCs: Creative and Cultural Skills, e-skills UK, IMI, Improve, Proskills, and Skillset. Three of these SSCs work largely with digital products which are readily transferred electronically, thus facilitating global working.

Globalisation is both an opportunity and a threat. Improve and Skillset (Fashion & Textiles) both cited the ability to relocate production to areas of lower cost labour as a benefit of globalisation. However, this has the disadvantage for Wales of decreasing employment opportunities in these sectors.

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<sup>2</sup> UKCES (2009) Skills for Jobs: Today and Tomorrow

### Policy, Legislation and Regulation

In Wales, legislation and regulation comes from governments (e.g. Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), the UK Government and the European Union (EU)) or their agencies, such as the Health and Safety Executive. In certain industries economic regulators ensure that they operate in the interests of customers and the wider community.

Asset Skills, ConstructionSkills, Energy & Utility Skills, GoSkills, IMI, Improve, Lantra, People 1<sup>st</sup>, Proskills, Semta, Skills for Logistics, Skills for Justice and Skillset (Creative Media) all noted that public policy, whether at a European, UK or Wales level, drives the need for technical skills.

The Financial Services industry is heavily regulated. The Financial Skills Partnership notes a need for technically competent employees in Financial Services Authority (FSA) regulatory compliance, complying with the FSA Retail Distribution Review and in making returns to HMRC and the FSA.

Asset Skills, ConstructionSkills, Lantra, Proskills, Semta, Skills for Logistics, Skills for Justice, Skillset (Fashion & Textiles) and SummitSkills all highlight environmental and health and safety (H&S) legislation as a key driver of technical skills. Failure to comply with increasingly stringent environmental standards can result in large fines, possible imprisonment and reputational damage.

These issues are very much “business as usual” for many employers, but ones which will require technically skilled individuals to both operate in a compliant manner and also to interpret the standards and put in place business processes that ensure ongoing compliance.

### Technology

The increasing use of technology to boost productivity is a constant theme across the sectors. Examples include the use of mobile phones to make purchases, the use of online systems to enable consumers to research products and services and the large scale technical developments needed to meet the challenges of the low carbon agenda. Each of these will enable goods and services to be delivered in a more cost effective manner.

The productivity promise of a given technology will only be realised if there are suitable skilled individuals to utilise it in the intended manner.

e-skills UK, the SSC for business and information technology, has a key role to play. The skills it is responsible for are used in virtually the whole of the Wales economy and are a key contributor to improving the performance of Welsh businesses at every level. Research in 2010 by e-skills UK estimated that improving the uptake of IT could boost the Welsh economy by as much as £1.1 billion over the next five years.

In utility services (EU Skills) and telecoms (e-skills UK) the key need is to maintain the skills base needed to operate, service, expand and upgrade existing infrastructure, at the same time as meeting the demands of the new technologies required to meet growing customer expectations and market and political pressures.

Skillset and Creative and Cultural Skills cite a critical need for increasing levels of technical skills to develop and deliver ever more sophisticated digital content.

## Productivity

Much of the discussion about improving productivity revolves around skills rather than qualifications. Evidence from UKCES<sup>3</sup> shows a rise in the number of over-qualified individuals in employment (e.g. graduates working in a non-graduate roles).

The key policy challenge will be to influence educational choices towards (i) more economically valuable subjects and qualifications and (ii) non-traditional career and learning pathways. Achieving parity in reputation between vocational and academic educational pathways in the eyes of young people and their main influencers (e.g. teachers, parents, etc.) will be central to this.

One SSC, Improve Ltd, noted that using technology to enhance productivity is a double-edged sword: better productivity would mean that fewer staff are required. The counter argument to this is that an employer's role is to produce wealth, not create jobs. Creating wealth provides an overall boost to the economy which indirectly leads to jobs being created.

## The environment

Operating in a more sustainable manner is a key issue for many businesses which have implications for the skills profile of a sector's workforce. However, many "green" issues will be addressed by re-skilling rather than creating new jobs. This approach was a key theme of the 2009 Low Carbon Cluster SSA report<sup>4</sup> undertaken by a consortium of SSCs.

Examples of this include plumbers diversifying in fitting solar hot water systems, electricians fitting solar PV systems and traditional energy generators transferring engineering staff to work on renewable energy projects.

## The economy

The overall health of the Wales economy can have indirect, but nevertheless significant, impact on skills in many sectors. This particularly applies to those industries which rely on discretionary consumer spending such as Skillsmart Retail and People 1<sup>st</sup>, who between them cover some 235,000 employees in Wales. As the recession reduces disposable incomes, demand for goods and services in a number of sectors has correspondingly fallen.

Consequently, many employers are either reducing their workforce levels or restructuring in a way that requires existing employees to perform new or additional functions, thus requiring new or updated skills.

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<sup>3</sup> Ambition 2020: World Class Skills and Jobs for the UK, 2009

<sup>4</sup> Low carbon Cluster Sector Skills Assessment Report 2009

### Social

The rising expectation of consumers was cited by many SSCs as a key skills driver. Examples include the desire for aesthetically perfect foods and cars with more features. This in turn drives the need for ever more skilled individuals to design, create and deliver the products and services being demanded.

The age profile of the population of Wales is changing, with older people and fewer younger people. Many employers are concerned that the retirement of the 1960's 'baby boom' generation could see them lose significant proportions of their experienced staff, along with the knowledge and skills that they have built up. Although these retirements appear to offer employment opportunities for younger people, they will need years of training and on-the-job experience to match the skills of those that they are replacing.

Conversely, the proportion of young people in the population is falling. ONS data shows that by 2020 there will be around 14% fewer 18-21 year-olds in the population compared to 2000<sup>5</sup>; so it is crucial that opportunities exist to up-skill and re-skill existing members of the working age population.

The final challenge is that young people generally prefer to be consumers of technology rather than producers of technology. This was clearly demonstrated in the research by Oslo University<sup>6</sup> which reported that the more developed a country the less interested its young people were in science. Unless this situation can be resolved in Wales future generations will be unable to take advantage of the increasingly technical high value jobs of the future.

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/populationestimates/flash\\_pyramid/default.htm](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/populationestimates/flash_pyramid/default.htm)

<sup>6</sup> ROSE: The Relevance of Science Education (ongoing)

### 3. Economic Renewal Programme

WAG's 2010 report *Economic Renewal: A new direction* speaks of wanting a strong economy "not as an end in itself, but for the integral contribution it can make to the quality of life and the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of people and communities in Wales".

It goes on to say that "whilst the Government itself makes a significant and direct contribution to the economy in terms of innovation, employment, procurement and capital investment, it cannot create jobs and prosperity in the wider economy. However, it can provide the conditions and framework to enable the private sector to flourish".

To deliver against these statements WG sets out five priorities:

1. Investing in high quality and sustainable infrastructure
2. Making Wales a more attractive place to do business
3. Broadening and deepening the skills base
4. Encouraging innovation
5. Targeting the business support we need to offer

They have also noted six priority sectors to which they will offer broad support:

1. ICT
2. Energy and environment
3. Advanced materials and manufacturing
4. Creative industries
5. Life sciences
6. Financial and professional services

WAG wishes to ensure that development funding is targeted on growth. Consequently all funding from the Department for the Economy and Transport will now be repayable to ensure that businesses are genuinely investing in their future and not just looking for a handout.

**Note:** Since this report was commissioned Minister for Business, Enterprise, Technology and Science Edwina Hart has confirmed she is considering expanding on the current six key sector approach to business support.

In her first interview since taking up her role in the new Labour administration - having been Health Minister in the previous coalition Government - she said that she could potentially add construction, tourism and agriculture to the sector support portfolio, possibly others.

### 3.1. Skills issues in the ERP priority sectors

The following are the skills and occupational issues reported by SSCs for each ERP priority sector.

### 3.2. ICT

Every SSC noted the general contribution of ICT to improving the performance of their sector. The specific skills issues highlighted by SSCs are given in the Table 1 below.

Table 1: ICT Skills needs

Skills area	Specific skills needs
ICT Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding digital business models</li> <li>• Software Engineers with multiple language skills</li> <li>• IT &amp; Telecoms Management</li> <li>• Systems Developers and Internet staff</li> <li>• Web editing</li> </ul>
IT User Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word processing and spreadsheets</li> <li>• Sage and other accounting software</li> <li>• Administrative IT</li> <li>• The ability to understand and work with bespoke company systems</li> </ul>
Industry-specific ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-skilled staff</li> <li>• High definition and 3D technology</li> <li>• Technicians, riggers, electricians, unit nurses, and line producers</li> <li>• Archiving skills</li> <li>• Stereo 3D and Nuke software skills</li> <li>• Capable Creative Technologists</li> <li>• Researchers with journalistic and investigative skills in the media industry</li> <li>• Scientific waste data analysis</li> <li>• Service information and ticketing related ICT</li> <li>• ICT to support learning</li> <li>• IT for travel consultants</li> <li>• ICT for process control</li> <li>• CAD/CAM</li> <li>• CNC Operators</li> <li>• Data management and navigation</li> <li>• Information/data retrieval, interpretation and application of technical data</li> </ul>

### 3.3. Energy and environment

The extent to which new jobs will be created in the low carbon economy is debatable. However, evidence from SSCs points to the majority of skills issues being brought about as a result of existing roles having to adapt to changing demands. However, there are also many job opportunities being created in the conventional energy industry, principally by the need to replace retiring staff.

The specific skills needs highlighted by SSCs are given in Table 2.

**Table 2: Energy and Environmental Skills needs**

Skills area	Specific skills needs
<b>Energy &amp; Environment Sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project managers with renewable energy experience</li> <li>• Overhead lines workers</li> <li>• Technical sales people</li> <li>• Wind turbine technicians</li> <li>• Ornithologists</li> <li>• Scientific waste data analysis skills, communication, customer service health and safety, vehicle and machine maintenance and drivers in the waste management industry</li> </ul>
<b>Industry-specific Energy and Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Energy management in the operation of buildings</li> <li>• Use of advanced materials to reduce the energy consumption of buildings</li> <li>• Green IT Skills</li> <li>• Project managers and ornithologists in offshore wind</li> <li>• Maintaining technically advanced vehicles</li> <li>• Transport planning to minimise environmental impact</li> <li>• Recycling of hazardous and complex materials</li> <li>• Understanding and managing compliance with environmental legislation</li> <li>• Environmental Auditing and Lifecycle assessments</li> <li>• Non-domestic energy assessors</li> <li>• Awareness of “Green” issues and solutions in all occupations</li> </ul>

### 3.4. Advanced materials and manufacturing

Advanced manufacturing is another key enabling industry. In addition to the employment it offers its products and services are important in meeting the aspirations of consumers for increasingly sophisticated goods and services at ever lower prices.

As an example, a 2010 BMW Mini Cooper (72.4mpg) outperforms its 1960s' cousin (32mpg) by 126% without the use of any resource-intensive hybrid technologies. This improved fuel economy is undoubtedly based on the use of advanced materials.

Much renewable technology is based on advanced materials. Fabricating a 50 metre turbine blade from low tech metals would result in an unacceptably heavy product which would be prone to stress failure and give poor performance. Therefore, new techniques such as resin infusion and vacuum bagging are continually being researched and developed. This requires technical expertise in engineering, polymers and nanotechnology.

Many of the skills needs associated with advanced materials and manufacturing are embedded in other roles. Typical of this would be the use of improved alloys to boost the performance of power stations.

The specific skills needs associated with advanced materials and manufacturing are noted in Table 3.

**Table 3: Advanced materials and Manufacturing skills needs**

Skills area	Specific skills needs
<b>Advanced materials and Manufacturing Sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced materials in wind turbine manufacturing</li> <li>• Use of lightweight materials in vehicle manufacture</li> <li>• CAD/CAM</li> <li>• Materials requirements planning</li> </ul>
<b>Industry-specific Advanced materials and Manufacturing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern Methods of Construction (e.g. offsite manufacturing)</li> <li>• Utilising complex materials in construction</li> <li>• Design skills to optimise the use of advanced materials</li> </ul>

### 3.5. Creative industries

The creative industries are increasingly reliant on technical skills to create digital products and services. This trend has been noted by both Creative and Cultural Skills and Skillset.

The skills needs highlighted by SSCs are given in Table 4.

**Table 4: Creative Industries skills needs**

Skills area	Specific skills needs
Creative Industries Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backstage technical skills in live music and the performing arts</li> <li>• Heritage and contemporary craft skills</li> <li>• Archaeology skills</li> <li>• Jewellery making skills</li> <li>• Conservation skills and other specialist skills required in museums and galleries</li> <li>• Skills for working with children and young people</li> <li>• Digital skills</li> <li>• Digital convergence skills - the need for multi-skilled staff who understand multi-platform systems</li> <li>• High Definition and 3D technologies, digital convergence, CGI: 3D/Animation/VFX/Graphic design skills</li> <li>• Technicians, riggers, electricians, unit nurses, and line producers</li> <li>• Archiving and Stereo 3D and Nuke software</li> <li>• Photo Imaging, Digital Technology, Digital workflow and Management of Digital Assets</li> <li>• Web editing</li> <li>• Capable Creative Technologists</li> <li>• Researchers with journalistic and investigative skills</li> </ul>

### 3.6. Life sciences

WAG defines Life Sciences as encompassing pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical technology businesses, with wide ranging activities including research, testing, manufacture and the provision of specialist services. Cogent is the lead SSC in this cluster, with Semta have a key supporting role.

The skills needs highlighted by SSCs are given in Table 6: Financial and Professional Services skills needs.

**Table 5: Life Sciences skills needs**

Skills area	Specific skills needs
Life Sciences Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biology</li> <li>• Chemistry (medicinal and analytical)</li> <li>• Bio-chemistry</li> <li>• Pharmaceutical</li> <li>• Toxicology</li> <li>• Microbiology</li> <li>• In vivo sciences - physiology, pharmacology, toxicology, pathology</li> <li>• Clinical research</li> <li>• Engineering</li> <li>• Maths and statistics - including advanced maths and mathematical modelling</li> </ul>

### 3.7. Financial and professional services

In the financial services, traditional retail banking has been joined by growth in insurance, asset management, funds management and pensions firms. WAG characterises this sector as being innovative with home-grown, household names competing with blue chip, multi-national companies.

It is clear from the negative effects of the recent banking crash that a stable and effective financial service sector is needed to provide the finance that businesses need to invest in growth and individuals need for mortgages and personal loans. As with other sectors and clusters, effective delivery and productivity is driven by a range of technical roles.

The specific skills needs highlighted by SSCs are given in Table 6.

**Table 6: Financial and Professional Services skills needs**

Skills area	Specific skills needs
Financial and Professional Services Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT skills, excel and word processing</li> <li>• Back-office systems</li> <li>• SAGE accountancy systems</li> <li>• FSA on-line returns</li> <li>• Customer Service</li> <li>• Writing letters of recommendation</li> <li>• Research and data analysis</li> <li>• Commerciality and selling</li> <li>• Leadership and Management skills</li> <li>• Multi Agency Working</li> <li>• Equality and Diversity knowledge and skills</li> </ul>

### 3.8. SSCs and ERP priorities

This section gives a broad view of how SSC activities relate to the ERP priorities while also giving a more detailed view of the types of technical roles that SSCs regard as being important in Wales. Table 7, SSCs and ERP priorities below summarises the involvement of SSCs against cluster priorities set out in the ERP.

Table 7: SSCs and ERP priorities

Key L = Lead role C = Part of appropriate cluster I = Has an overall interest P = Has a specific, partial interest	ICT	Energy and environment	Advanced materials and manufacturing	Creative industries	Life sciences	Financial and professional services
Asset Skills	P	C	P	P		I
Cogent SSC	I	C	C	P	L	I
ConstructionSkills	P	C	P	P		I
Creative and Cultural Skills	C	P	P	C		I
e-skills UK	L	P	P	P		L
Energy & Utility Skills	I	L	I		P	P
Financial Skills Partnership	I	P		P		L
GoSkills	I	C	P	P		I
IMI	I	P	P	P		I
Improve	I	P	C	P		I
Lantra	I	C	P	P	I	I
Learning and Skills Improvement Service	I	I	I	I	I	I
People 1 <sup>st</sup>	I	P		I		I
Proskills	I	C	C	P		I
Semta	C	C	L	P	C	I
Skills Active	P	P		P	I	I
Skills for Care & Development	I	I	P	P	I	
Skills for Health	I	I	P	P	C	
Skills for Justice	I	P		P		I
Skills for Logistics	I	C	P	P		I
Skillset (Creative Media)	C	P		L		I
Skillset (Fashion and Textiles)	I	C	C	C	I	I
Skillsmart Retail	I	P	P	P	I	I
SummitSkills	I	C	P	P		I

Clearly every SSC has at least some role to play in ensuring the success of the six priority clusters, with most SSCs having at least one of their sub-sectors referred to by name in the ERP report.

## 4. SSC interventions - helping solve the problem

In their contributions to this report, SSCs highlight well over 100 separate major interventions that they have initiated or brokered in Wales. These interventions are the visible deliverables of SSC activities.

The largest single category of intervention can be categorised as “Skills Development”, which covers over 30% of all SSC interventions. This category describes the delivery activities and projects that SSCs undertake:

- Creative and Cultural Skills delivering a Cultural Heritage CPD programme;
- e-skills UK brokering an Internship programme;
- Energy & Utility Skills developing a Competence management system in the waste management and water industries;
- Financial Skills Partnership creating an advice programme for employers on the effect of the regulatory Retail Distribution Review;
- IMI have created a range of accreditation schemes for technicians and managers;
- Improve has created a Young Recruits programme to create entry routes into the sector;
- Lantra has assisted over 270 individuals to access training in the environmental sector;
- People 1<sup>st</sup> secured and are using a licence for World Host, a Customer Service Training Programme;
- SkillsActive are running the ‘Step Up’ initiative to up-skill fitness instructors from level 2 to level 3;
- Skills for Care and Development are working with Jobcentre Plus to provide pre-employment training for those seeking work;
- Skills for Justice have a programme to facilitate and co-ordinate action learning sets across the justice sector;
- Skills for Logistics are promoting non driving qualifications to employers (e.g. traffic, office and customer service);
- Skillset (Creative media) fund delivery of a range of upskilling courses and offer bursaries to a variety of specialists and freelancers.

This list is by no means exhaustive but illustrates the wide range of activities SSCs are directly involved in which support the ERP priority of *Broadening and deepening the skills base* while contributing to the other priorities of *Making Wales a more attractive place to do business*, *Investing in a High Quality and Sustainable Infrastructure* and *Encouraging Innovation*.

Other significant categories are “Qualifications Development” (16%) and “Apprenticeship Development” (15%). This means that around one-third of SSC interventions are targeted at ensuring that employers and learners have access to high quality Apprenticeships and qualifications. This is consistent with the ERP priority of *Broadening and deepening the skills base*.

One smaller (8%) but a still important category is that of “Supporting Activity”. This covers a range of activities, such as ConstructionSkills allocating resources to identifying major construction projects in Wales and working with the key stakeholders to identify and address their skills needs.

Other examples of supporting activity include:

- Creative and Cultural Skills holding six-monthly meetings with the DCELLS Head of Qualification Strategies and Reform to review their action plans and monitor progress;
- the Institute of the Motor Industry creating a careers web portal;
- Improve sitting on the steering group of WULF programmes to represent employer views;
- Semta organising a programme whereby Toyota donate cars and component assemblies to around 20 FE colleges in Wales for use in engineering workshops.

Supporting Activity interventions are consistent with, and supportive of, the ERP priority of *Broadening and deepening the skills base*. Equally it can be argued that interventions such as the Semta/Toyota initiative make Wales a more attractive location for firms associated with the motor industry (ERP: *Making Wales a more attractive place to do business*).

## 5. Conclusions

One of the key findings to emerge from this work was the sheer breadth of sector-specific technical skills that SSCs know to be an issue for employers in their sector in Wales. Even in summarised form SSCs note some 211 individual technical skills which their employers regard as critical to their business but are not readily available. In some cases, such as computer programming, the headline skills set breaks down into nearly 20 specialities, each of which has a different training and development route.

Each specialist role within a sector represents a real employment opportunity for an individual with the appropriate learning background. It is clear is that if an individual wishes to work in the vast majority of arenas they will need to develop and maintain a STEM-related element of their skill set. However, the minimum starting point would be a learning profile which gives the individual learner sound numeracy and literacy skills and, preferably, an understanding of science and technology in some manner. Such a background will equip them well to undertake the more specialised training needed to take advantage of technical roles identified in this report.

Each role represents an employment opportunity, either for a workless individual or one wishing to progress and develop. Therefore, development and career pathways (including funding streams) need to be flexible enough to accommodate the needs of both new entrants to the labour market and those already in labour market and looking to change careers and/or sectors. This is particularly important when enabling sector-specific solutions, as the skills needs and related solutions of one sector may not be appropriate for other sectors.

In spite of rising unemployment, anecdotal evidence suggests that employers are still finding it difficult to find the skilled workers that they need<sup>7</sup>. Employers are willing to train their workforce in the job-specific technical skills that they require, but they note that such training will only be properly effective where the trainee has sufficient literacy, numeracy, science and technology knowledge gained from their previous learning.

The challenge is to find ways of equipping individuals of all ages and backgrounds in Wales with the underpinning knowledge and technical skills that they require in order to be able to take advantage of the wide range of technical roles on offer.

Finally, many employers are reluctant to develop their products and services or recruit new skills until they can be certain that returns on their investment will be realised within a defined timeframe. Therefore, government has a crucial role to play in not only bringing certainty to markets where it can, but also in providing incentives to businesses so that they can be encouraged to recruit and train their workforces in a proactive, rather than reactive, manner.

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<sup>7</sup> National Employer Skills Survey 2009

## 6. Appendix A - SSC Contributions

### Asset Skills

Asset Skills is the Sector Skills Council for facilities management, housing, property, planning, cleaning and parking.

#### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- A key driver of technical skills within Asset Skills sectors, particularly in recent times, has been UK policy and regulation - specifically that connected to the environment. The introduction of legislation around low carbon for example is having a significant impact on the way people perform their roles and the skills they need.
- With the built environment contributing so significantly to carbon emissions, roles around energy management have emerged within the property sector in the form of domestic and non-domestic energy assessors and advisors (linked to arbed). Within cleaning, employers are increasingly under pressure to work in more sustainable ways, which has led to the introductions of new technologies and equipment, which employees often need technical skills to use.

#### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- Within cleaning, language, literacy and numeracy skills (coupled with other employability skills) have been highlighted as important, particularly when it comes to fulfilling the customer service side of the role if cleaning during the day. Language skills mainly relate to the need to speak English, however, a third of Asset Skills employers in Wales that took part in recent research noted that the ability to speak Welsh was desirable.
- Within the property industry, technological skills are important, in particular IT Skills. Project management skills and energy management skills were also highlighted.
- There are currently a variety of skills needs in the housing sector. Accounting skills were highlighted, which is unsurprising given that the sector has had to deal with significant budget cuts. Skills needs also exist in customer service and people management.

#### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

Asset Skills is involved in two SPFP (Sector Priority Fund Pilot) projects. One for which Asset Skills has sole responsibility and in which it is piloting newly developed qualifications and qualifications for which there is no current delivery in Wales. These qualifications are:

- Apprenticeships in Facilities Management, Housing and Surveying (Level 3)
- Foundation Apprenticeships in Cleaning and Housing (Level 2)
- Skills for Supporting Public Services (SSPS - Level 2)
- Local Environmental Services (LES - Level 2)
- National Federation of Property Professionals Technical Awards (NFOPP Level 3) in Sale of Residential Property and in Residential Lettings and Property Management
- The second SPFP project is in collaboration with Construction, EU and Summit Skills and involves the development and delivery of the new Energy Adviser (Home) Level 3 and

Energy Adviser (Non-Domestic) Level 3/4 qualifications geared specifically for Welsh needs and arbed - Wales' Strategic Energy Performance Investment Programme.

### Cogent

Cogent is the Sector Skills Council for the chemicals, pharmaceuticals, nuclear, oil and gas, petroleum and polymer industries.

#### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- The main drivers are new and changes in technology and regulatory requirements.
- Clearly areas such as nuclear decommissioning and new build will require the development of a significantly sized skilled workforce over the next twenty or so years.

#### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

A significant part of technical skills development is for the technician population developing their practical skills and abilities and maintaining their regulatory requirements.

#### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Continuing to work with employer groups to develop the “gold standard” for a wider range of jobs.
- The Gold Standard is a national framework for continuous professional development setting out the skills required for world class performance in key job roles in the process industries. It describes and maps the competencies required to do each job across four areas of competence: Technical Competence; Business Improvement; Compliance and Functional and Behavioral.
- Ensuring that we have sufficient specific NOS and qualifications to meet our industry needs. In addition to their use underpinning qualifications Cogent promotes NOS for as a way of improving the quality of goods and services, increasing employee productivity and reducing recruitment costs, through:
  - Assessing skills already in the workforce and highlighting any gaps.
  - Identifying the competencies which bring together the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to do the work.
  - Motivating employees to learn and develop new and existing skills.
  - Acting as a benchmark for rewarding experience, knowledge and competence.
  - Working with FE/HE and private providers to try to develop the necessary Wales based provision on a local basis. A key element of this is the development of Apprenticeship frameworks which provide learners with a "passport" to rewarding careers, and employers with talented and competent employees.
- With the support of employers, Cogent has developed Apprenticeship frameworks; they provide a model for apprenticeship training and therefore a tool to assist employers in the development of their own apprenticeships. Cogent have a specific framework for Apprentices in Wales.

# ConstructionSkills

ConstructionSkills is the Sector Skills Council for the construction industry.

### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- Legal: Environmental/Sustainability legislation and targets, Welsh Assembly Measures, Welsh Assembly Legislative Competency Orders, Health and Safety legislation.
- Environmental: Waste, Planning/Zero carbon targets, Climate change.
- Technological: Modern methods of construction, Energy infrastructure, Low - zero carbon technology, Offsite manufacture.
- Economic: Public deficit, availability of finance, energy prices, recession.
- Political: Welsh policy e.g. One Wales, Welsh Assembly election in 2011, National Policy Statements, e.g. Energy, Housing Policy, possible introduction of tuition fees.
- Social: Unemployment, ageing workforce, construction industry image, immigration/migration.

### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- It is likely that a mix of soft skills and hard technical skills will be needed, driven by the move towards multi-skilling and greater use of Modern Method of Construction (MMC).
- Off-site MMC will result in skills needs moving from the building site to off-site locations. This may mean a substantial reduction in bricklayers, plasterers, tilers, electricians, plumbers etc. on-site. Initially many of these trades will still be required in the off-site factories, but eventually, possibly rapidly, the level of skill needed will be reduced by the advantages of factory conditions and methods, in particular by having one skilled operator supervising a number of less skilled operators.
- New skills will be needed along the lines of improved understanding of the composition and purpose of components and assemblies and how they can be moved and lifted. With a wide range of substantially different components, site workers will need a greater understanding of general building issues such as tolerances, air/water-tightness, and the interaction between components.
- In general there will be a need for site supervisors and site labour that have an understanding of modern terminology, the ability to read, understand and follow instructions on new materials and components.

### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- ConstructionSkills in association with its stakeholders has developed a Skills Action Plan for Wales, which is submitted to Welsh Assembly Government on a quarterly basis.
- There are numerous activities detailed including: Promotion of ConstructionSkills Competition 2010; raising awareness of 14-19 pathways and qualifications; seeking endorsement of pilot Technical Apprenticeship programme in Wales; seeking endorsement for a Higher Apprenticeship initiative in Wales; identifying and supporting major construction projects in Wales; funding and delivering SPF projects.

## Creative and Cultural Skills

### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- Globalisation: Increasing levels and standards of global competition are expected in the creative and cultural industries, as other countries recognise the economic value of creativity as a significant driver of growth.
- Technology: Increasing use of digital technology in business<sup>8</sup>, IPR and copyright management.
- Growth: The digital and creative industries have been identified by the UKCES<sup>9</sup> as an emerging growth sector and one in which the Government sees the UK demonstrating competitive advantage.
- In Wales, as highlighted by One Wales (WAG 2007) the creative and cultural industries plays a key role in tourism and its contribution to economic prosperity and job creation.

### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- Backstage technical skills in live music and the performing arts
- Heritage and contemporary craft skills
- Archaeology skills
- Jewellery making skills
- Conservation skills and other specialist skills required in museums and galleries
- Skills for working with children and young people
- Digital skills

### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Provide detailed sectoral applied research around digital business models.
- Deliver Cultural Heritage CPD and Succession planning CPD events this financial year
- Six monthly meetings with DCELLS Head of Sector Qualification Strategies and Reform
- NOS development programme agreed with DCELLS Qualification and Learning Group.
- Principal Learning in Creative & Media Qualification successfully implemented.
- Regular bulletins sent to SSC point of contact & careers advisor network regarding apprentice posts, expression of interest sent to partake in Apprentice matching service pilot.
- Apprenticeships: up to 40 employers engaged and pledging to take 50 + apprentices.

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<sup>8</sup> BIS (2009) Digital Britain Final Report.

<sup>9</sup> UKCES (2009) Skills for Jobs: Today and Tomorrow – The National Skills Audit for England 2010

### e-skills UK

e-skills UK is the Sector Skills Council for Business and Information Technology.

#### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- Drivers of technical skills in the IT & Telecoms sector in Wales include workforce growth and globalisation and technology changes. Also the growth in mobile computing / applications and virtualisation work and, potentially, Green IT, Virtualisation, SaaS / Cloud computing and Business Process Management
- Key issues for employers are security and data protection, innovation, cloud computing, convergence of communications and IT and the real world web.

#### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- Welsh employers: problems recruiting Software Engineers, IT & Telecoms Management, Systems Developers and Internet staff.
- General concerns: higher level technical skills and sector knowledge / experience of applicants for IT & Telecoms positions. One in six firms in Wales also report gaps in business and technical skills.
- Current needs: Over half of IT & Telecoms positions advertised are in the field of Systems Design or Systems Development whilst the most commonly requested job specific, technical skills were: SQL, .NET, C#, SQL Server, ASP, JavaScript, Java, PHP, HTTP and Visual Basic.
- Future needs: central to nearly all future IT trends is specific and high level technical knowledge:
  - Security and data protection skills
  - Technology specific skills - especially around the area of convergence
  - Analytical and research skills connecting information and technology to business problems.

#### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Computer Clubs for Girls (CC4G)
- Welsh Baccaalaureate Principal learning IT
- The Information Technology Management for Business (ITMB) degree: Designed by employers to address specific industry skills needs and piloted by the University of Glamorgan.
- e-skills Internships are being rolled out in partnership with Welsh HEIs to address the falling student number undertaking industrial placements and improve essential skills in graduates.
- In partnership with WAG, shared modern apprenticeships for SMEs and a “Pathways to Apprenticeship” Programme that will provide a one year intensive MA programme for future IT professionals.
- In Wales we would like to create a self-sustaining Skills Academy for IT

- The e-skills employer forum for Wales endorsed the need to have a Welsh specific careers website for the sector and agreed to supply content for use on the site. e-skills UK is currently working with Software Alliance (SAW) to explore this work.

### Energy & Utility Skills

#### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- EU, UK and Welsh energy policies: Carbon reduction and sustainable energy production targets require higher level skills. Increased gas importation facilities and growth in “distributed” energy generation will require upskilling of the current level 2 and 3 workforce.
- UK and Welsh waste policies: Waste reduction and resource management policies are key drivers of technical skills. “Towards Zero Waste” sets out Wales’ plans for resource management. The move to from land-filling to waste being a source of valuable commodities will require a significant new technical skills base.
- The age profile of the technical workforce across the utilities is higher than average. Replacing experienced staff who retire will be a significant challenge for the sector.
- Infrastructure replacement, renewal and expansion plans: Much of the utility infrastructure has reached the end of its operational life (e.g. overhead power lines, gas and water mains).
- The rise in home energy efficiency and micro-generation of energy will lead to wider skills sets being required of the domestic gas installer workforce.

#### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- Across the sector and especially in renewable energy: Industry specific project management skills will be crucial its development. Generic PM Skills are much less valued.
- In the power transmission industry (high voltage): overhead linesworkers are needed.
- In onshore wind: technical sales people, wind turbine technicians, and ornithologists. In offshore wind: project managers and ornithologists.
- Waste management: scientific waste data analysis skills, communication, customer service health and safety, vehicle and machine maintenance and drivers.

#### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Working with Careers Wales to develop upskilling and progression pathways, illustrated by Welsh employer case studies, to highlight careers in Energy & Utility.
- Developing an on-line database to match qualifications and EU Skills-recognised training programmes to job specifications used by employers.
- Developing the waste management industry’s first Apprenticeship framework.
- Working to ensure that employers perceive that there are appropriate, fit for purpose, Apprenticeship and apprenticeship-related programmes in Wales (14-19 Work Based

Learning Pathways, Pathways to Apprenticeship and the Principal Lines of Learning within the Welsh Baccalaureate) to meet the requirements of employers in Wales.

- Continuing to engage with Welsh employers so that the Workforce Planning Model is able to provide the most accurate workforce skills data available for level 2-3 skill sets.
- Further developing its Competence Management System for the waste management and water industries.

## Financial Skills Partnership

The Financial Skills Partnership is the new name for the sector skills council representing the finance, accountancy and financial services sector.

### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- Systems and Controls under Financial Services Regulation
- Retail Distribution Review
- Monitoring of Business Activities proving that firms treat customers fairly
- HMRC & FSA returns
- What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?
- IT skills, excel and word processing, back-office systems, SAGE accountancy systems and FSA on-line returns
- Customer Service, writing letters of recommendation (reasons why). Research and data analysis
- Preparing for the next generation of adviser - gaining all technical qualifications
- Being commercial, understanding and believing in sales as a part of service

### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Advising firms of the impact of the Retail Distribution Review.
- Accrediting qualifications to ensure they meet standards.
- Developing National Occupational Standards.
- Liaising with educators (e.g. Speak up for Skills forums) to encourage better preparation for work in students both in attitude and ability.

## GoSkills

GoSkills is the Sector Skills Council for passenger transport.

### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- Changing technology - especially in areas of motive power/population systems with low-emission technology including hybrid and fuel-cell passenger transport vehicle engines. These contribute towards lower greenhouse gas emissions and lower operating costs through lower fuel consumption.
- Also, new information and communication systems used in customer service, service information and ticketing and related job-specific ICT.
- Vehicle design, EU vehicle emission regulations, national/local vehicle procurement policy.
- UK and Welsh government transport and tourism policy.

### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- The skills and competences required to be able to install, operate, service, maintain and repair systems based on new technology in the areas of motive power/propulsion systems. This includes improved, smoother driving styles that use less fuel/power, and impacts drivers/operators, maintenance and repair operatives, purchasing departments, etc.
- Job-specific IT skills for use in customer service, service information and ticketing and customer service skills. Therefore, this impacts on customer-facing staff, ICT personnel, marketing and sales personnel. Particularly important will be: customer interaction and responsiveness, verbal, written and associated communication skills, team working skills and problem solving skills.
- Step changes required in skills sets for transport planning, procurement, infrastructure and engineering skills and related occupations.

### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Focus on Modern Apprenticeships
- Work with training providers to extend the training offer to the sector. There is limited provision for the sector and we need to grow training provision to extend the use of qualifications and MAs and to enable employers to access technical training
- Need to provide support for managers to ensure that they are up to date on changes and can therefore plan skills/re-skilling for their workforce.

## IMI

IMI is the Sector Skills Council for the automotive retail industry.

### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- The global economy ultimately drives consumer demand while Government policy can drive consumer demand and business behaviour, and set technical standards.
- Consumer preference is a key driver for the sector. Consumers make their choices on a range of factors and the constant development of new models requires businesses to invest in technical training. Consequently training providers must stay abreast of the latest developments.
- The threat of the National Consumer Council's super complaint has put more focus on improving the image of the sector and driving up skill levels. Industry standards such as PAS 125 are also contributing to improving skill levels in the sector.
- The industry itself has identified the need for improved leadership and management skills and to address technical skills gaps.

### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- Generic Skills: Customer Handling (sales and customer service), improved literacy and numeracy, problem-solving, communications, and team working.
- Management Skills: higher level of management, particularly leadership and strategic planning.
- Sales Skills: Constant new products and technologies require ongoing sales training.
- Technical Skills: Constant new products and technologies require ongoing technical training
- Administrative Skills around use of ICT
- Other: recycling and disposal of increasingly hazardous and complex materials and components.

### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Automotive Management Accreditation Scheme: a voluntary accreditation scheme designed to improve management and consistency of management within the retail industry.
- Foundation degrees: working with two FE providers in Wales on a FD for the Automotive Industry.
- Green skills: upskilling 150 technicians who are currently employed in the industry on Climate Control Systems and Hybrid Vehicle Awareness.
- Apprenticeships: a "Pathways to Apprenticeship" programme with approximately 200 learners and 12 training providers participating pan Wales.
- Supporting activities: Headlight (Schools programme), Autocity (Careers web portal), ATA (technician's accreditations scheme), Skills Auto (Automotive skills competition),

Membership scheme (awarded on the basis of an individual's qualifications, career history and motor industry experience.)

### Improve Ltd

Improve Ltd is the Sector Skills Council for the Food Manufacturing and Processing (FDMP) industries.

#### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- Regulation and compliance: The regulation of food, with over 90% of UK legislation being set at a EU level, is a key element of the government's agenda, whether in respect of food safety, food prices and security of supply or obesity and healthy eating. Greater green regulation including tax measures is anticipated, particularly targeting those processing techniques associated with higher levels of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Client requirements: In addition to regulation the Food and Drink Manufacturing and Processing industry must comply with the auditing requirements of the large multiples.
- Technology: The FDMP industry uses technology at all stages of the food chain from genetics through product development and advanced processing techniques to logistics and online sales.
- Globalisation and market power: Companies are relocating due to cost advantages. There is also downward pressure on employment in the sector due to improved labour productivity.
- Consumer demands: The FDMP industry is almost totally demand-led with demand being dominated by consumer choice and market price.

#### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- Employers identified a shortage of Bakery and Butchery Skills, that some production employees were without basic literacy and numeracy skills and a shortage of sales skills and customer service skills. Technical skills, such as marketing, sales and website development, were also mentioned.
- 18% of businesses employing Food Science Technicians had encountered hard to fill vacancies in the last few years. Increasing competition for technical staff was noted.

#### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- The Wales Food Supply Chain project which aims to harmonise the approach to skills development across the whole food supply chain.
- "Young Recruits Programme" with Dunbia (butchery) and Memory Lane Cakes (Bakery).
- WAG's 'Young Recruits Programme' to create additional opportunities for young people to access quality apprenticeship places.
- A Bakery pre-apprenticeship scheme piloted in Wales and delivered by Cambrian training.
- Food Industry Skills Project: a collaborative venture between industry, Improve and the Food Industry Centre at UWIC to deliver targeted short courses.
- Improve is the lead SSC in the development of the 'Principal Line of Learning in Manufacturing & Product Design' in the Welsh Bacc.
- Improve is represented on the Steering Group of two WULF programmes currently being implemented by BFAWU and Communitas.

## Lantra

### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- Economic conditions: changing consumer demand; regeneration; Sustainability/globalisation
- Climate change: Sustainable greenhouse gas reductions, increased flood risk.
- Energy & Fuel security: Waste as a resource: anaerobic digesters, supplier of bio-mass/fuel
- Food safety and security: the Wales Food strategy and Food 2030.
- Legislation: Animal health and welfare, H&S
- Technology change and knowledge transfer.

### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- Business management skills including finance, sales and marketing, ICT and commerce.
- Effective marketing of careers, careers advice and guidance, entrepreneurial education.
- Mitigation of climate change, sustainable business practice, bio-mass supply chains.
- Knowledge of new agronomy techniques.
- Risk and Supply chain management, contract management and negotiation.
- Skills relating to animal handling and care, disease identification, control and bio-security.
- Technology transfer e.g. soil science, animal nutrition, advanced agronomy and pathology.
- Higher level technical skills for new production methods

### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Leading on a Food and Drink Skills Project with Improve, People 1<sup>st</sup> and Skillsmart Retail.
- Developed CourseFinder with details of 10,000 courses from 900 training providers
- Promoted the uptake of apprenticeships in the sector, reviewed Apprenticeships across the UK and made recommendations to Governments as to flexibilities required for the sector
- Developed Skills Manager - a range of skills assessment and recording systems for sector-based businesses
- Assisted over 270 individuals with access training support in the environmental sector in conjunction with Natur in the last 12 months
- Worked with Countryside Council for Wales to deliver practical environmental skills training and promoted the importance of leadership and management skills across the sector
- Engaged small businesses through skills development programmes like Farming Connect (1500 course places approved last year) including technology transfer, advice on climate change and low carbon techniques

# Learning and Skills Improvement Service (formerly LLUK)

The Learning and Skills Improvement Service is the sector-owned body that aims to accelerate the drive for excellence in the learning and skills sector.

### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- Welsh/UK/EU policy & regulation (Welsh language, Basic Skills, Economic Renewal, Community & Family Cohesion, Provider Network Transformation, Post 16 Quality & Effectiveness, Children & Young People Support Services, 14-19 learning pathways etc).
- Technology; Her Majesties Inspectorate ESTYN; Economy & Funding; Other Sector Skills Councils; Employer and Learner Needs; Environment; Awarding Body Requirements.

### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- Learning Delivery including Welsh Medium / Bilingual Learning Delivery
- Essential Skills Wales (Basic Skills) Learning Support and Learning Delivery
- Using Technology to Support Learning
- Employer Engagement and Learner Involvement
- Education for Sustainable Development & Global Citizenship

### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- National Occupational, Professional Standards and Application Guides developed for:
- Learning Delivery, Welsh Medium / Bilingual Learning Delivery
- Teachers of Literacy/Communication (ESW) and of Numeracy/Number (ESW)
- Teachers of ESOL and of Welsh for Adults
- Using Technology to Support Learning and embedding ESDGC
- Employer Engagement and Learner Involvement
- Learning & Development
- Recommendations to WAG for a Unit & Credit based Learning Professionals Framework
- Sector Priorities Fund Programme Bid to Welsh Assembly Government:
- Understanding the Nature of the Lifelong Learning Workforce - Accurate and Authoritative Labour Market Intelligence
- Explore Options for 'professionalisation' of the Lifelong Learning Workforce in Wales
- Develop an Integrated Continuing & Professional Development framework for the Lifelong Learning Sector in Wales:
- Develop agreed definition for CPD
- Develop guidance on 'dual-professionalism' upskilling requirements
- Pilot online standards based CPD portfolio planning tool
- Pilot 'Business Interchange' in Wales

## People 1st

People 1st is the Sector Skills Council for hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism

### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- Changing and growing consumer expectations
- Economic climate and its impact on the Welsh tourism sector
- Technological advances e.g. growth of online trading
- Tourism identified as a priority sector by the Welsh Assembly Government - Achieving our Potential, the national tourism strategy and its revision identifies better skills as a challenge which needs to be addressed in order to achieve the vision for tourism in Wales. Two initiatives that demonstrate the demand for skills are the Coastal Tourism Strategy and the Food Tourism Strategy.
- Migration policy - impact on the demand for skilled chefs, increasing need to recruit more from local labour pools and/or deskill operations

### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- Customer service - critical skill need
- Chef skills - critical skill need
- Employability skills (e.g. verbal communication, team work and good attitude) are key skill requirements in many sector occupations
- Food hygiene
- Health and safety
- Food and drink service skills
- Communication skills
- Product knowledge
- Sales and IT skills (particularly for travel consultants)
- Specialist knowledge and in some cases language skills (tour guides)
- IT skills

### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Plough to Plate: People 1st are working with three other Sector Skills Councils<sup>10</sup> to identify the specific skills required across the food chain.
- WorldHost: People 1st secured the license for WorldHost, a customer service training programme which is being delivered in Wales to address the customer service skill needs and deliver a 'sense of place'. Worldhost training covers four customer service training

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<sup>10</sup> Lantra (land based sector), Skillsmart Retail (retail) and Improve (food manufacturing)

### Proskills

Proskills UK is the Sector Skills Council for the Process and Manufacturing Sector.

#### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- **Technology:** Technological changes in production aimed at driving efficiency have been a major feature of the sector over the last couple of decades, with many traditional job roles changing or combining as advances are made. Provision and qualifications must be flexible enough to recognise these changes. Technology is also becoming more and more important in reaching the marketplace and for many (particularly smaller) companies, ICT and online skills will be essential in the future.
- **Regulation and legislation:** Many of the industries are subject to large amounts of environmental regulation and legislation, and the Low Carbon agenda will have a large effect in the future.
- **Recruitment:** Especially at lower levels, low recruitment levels during the recession mean that skills development is more focused on upskilling existing employees than on new recruits. There is therefore a need for smaller units of skills provision rather than large qualifications/frameworks. This is likely to change again in any future upturn as recruitment picks up again.
- **Efficiency:** improving process and product quality are helping companies to remain competitive locally, nationally, and globally
- **Energy:** rising prices will require greater efficiencies in process and quality controls and product development for companies to remain profitable
- **Health and Safety:** is a priority across the sector.
- **Aging workforce:** especially in technical areas

#### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

Job-specific units of competence that can be combined flexibly as required, ICT skills, Process control and efficiency skills (Business Improvement Techniques, etc), Health and Safety, Regulatory compliance (particularly environmental/low carbon), Customer facing skills.

#### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Proskills is working in partnership with 2 other SSCs, SEMTA and Cogent on a collaborative project for the manufacturing sector funded through the WAG Sector Priorities Fund. The project will seek to develop providers and provision required by the manufacturing sector within Wales and, where appropriate, link to the CQfW;
- Promoting 'profile' which maps job roles to national occupational standards;
- Promoting the uptake of apprenticeships and recently brokered an agreement between a trade association and a WAG funded training provider for funded print apprenticeships within Wales
- Working in partnership with Cardiff University on a ESF supported project linked to the development and delivery of low carbon and sustainability provision for the built environment sector.

## Semta

Semta is the Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies

### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

The introduction of new technologies or equipment; Development of new products and services; new legislative or regulatory requirements; Introduction of new working practices.

### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

Within Wales the most frequently cited Technical and Engineering skills identified by sector were:

- Computer Aided Design (CAD) and Fabrication - metals sector.
- CNC Machine Operation and Computer Aided Design (CAD) - mechanical equipment sector.
- Computer Aided Design (CAD), Materials Requirement Planning (MRPII) and CNC Machine Operation - electrical equipment and electronics sector.
- Computer Aided Design (CAD) - automotive sector.
- General engineering skills, electronics and electrical engineering - other transport equipment sector.

### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Providing support to the work of the Welsh Manufacturing Forum and the Welsh Electronic Forums
- Shared Apprenticeship: pilot project aimed at SMEs and funded by Welsh Assembly Government.
- Supporting the Pathways to Apprenticeship in Wales
- Supporting the WAG funded project “Career Progression for Females in the Science Engineering and Technology Sector”
- Supporting World Skills and Skills Wales competitions
- Engineering Week Wales: running over 1000 Engineering taster sessions with Colegau Cymru.
- Established a capital support project with Toyota manufacturing to donate cars, engines and gearboxes to around 20 FE colleges in Wales for use in engineering workshops.
- Semta in Wales are working on developing an enhanced strategy based training plan that delivers improvements to company Quality, Cost and Delivery.
- Tailor-made Training for Welsh Manufacturers: Semta have secured funding from Welsh Assembly Government and European Social Fund to lead the skills priority project for the sector.
- Credit and Qualification Framework for Wales: Semta is now licensed to assign credit under the CQFW (Common Accord Forum)
- The activities noted above are Wales specific. Semta also identified 10 other UK wide initiatives that are applicable in Wales.

### SkillsActive

SkillsActive is the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure, Learning and Well-being, comprising Sport and Recreation, Health and Fitness, Playwork, The Outdoors and Caravans.

#### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- The primary drivers of skilled technical roles are consumer trends, government policy, legislation and funding. Secondary drivers (globalisation and technology) also impact on the sector.
- For sport, fitness and the outdoors, healthy living and the desire to keep fit are key consumer and government policy drivers.
- For the caravan subsector, tourism, the exchange rates, the trend to “staycation” rather than holiday abroad are all key drivers. However rising consumer expectations require more sophisticated offerings which in turn require more technically skilled staff.
- Technical and practical skills are essential to a large proportion of SkillsActive sector occupations for legislative or regulatory reasons.

#### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- General: Operations/ duty manager/ assistant manager, playworkers and coach/ fitness instructor/ personal trainers. Technical and practical skills and communication skills are more in need of improvement for the SkillsActive sector than the Wales economy as a whole in the FSW survey<sup>11</sup>.
- Caravans: maintaining safety, customer service and communication.
- Fitness: Fitness instructor roles range from level 2 gym instructors to level 4 specialist instructors who work with health conditions.
- Playwork: Playwork specific skills and qualifications to enable workers to make the transition from other childcare sectors into playwork and vice versa for career progression.

#### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

SkillsActive has also lead or collaborated on the following initiatives:

- SkillsActive secured funding through the Welsh Assembly Government ‘Sector Step Up’ initiative to up-skilling fitness instructors from level 2 to level 3.
- Funded by WAG, SkillsActive has worked in partnership with Skills for Health on a project that has led to the production of a workforce development plan to underpin the delivery of key government strategies including ‘Climbing Higher’, and ‘Food and Fitness’.
- SkillsActive has worked in partnership with the Welsh Assembly Government to pilot ‘Work Based Learning Pathways’ (WBLP) which has allowed young people to combine their academic studies with a blend of vocational orientated learning and work experience.
- SkillsActive continues to develop the second pilot phase of its two online tools ‘Active Analyser’ and ‘Active Passport’. Active Analyser, an online training needs analysis tool

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<sup>11</sup> Future Skills Wales, 2005

which incorporates sector approved job role profiles based upon National Occupational Standards.

### Skills for Care and Development

Skills for Care and Development is the Sector Skills Council for people working in early years, children and young people's services, & those working in social work and social care for children and adults.

#### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

The aging population and the use of assisted living technology to enable the elderly to carry on living at home; The safeguarding of vulnerable people and children and young people is at the heart of all social care work and mandatory registration drives technical skills needs; Welsh language skills and the needs of service users for a service in Welsh is becoming an increasingly visible skills need in the sector.

#### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

Cross boundary workers working with people who receive care in their own homes; Child development, safeguarding and risk assessment and management; Loss, grief and trauma in the lives of children and young people in residential child care; Management learning, especially in relation to leadership; Development of Welsh language skills by the workforce, including increased provision of sector specific workforce development (e.g. courses of study) in the medium of Welsh.

#### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- The Care Council (SfC&D) is working with the NLIAM to provide guidance and design a structure for those new types of worker as they emerge. Re-ablement services are growing so further work needs to be done to quantify the numbers of service users and workers involved in intensive support which requires a range of skills and multi agency working.
- Jobcentre Plus are working with the Care Council to provide Pre Employment Training to those seeking work.
- Work is currently being taken forward by the Care Council into progressing a Continuous Professional Development Programme for the Residential Childcare workforce, work is also going forward to identify common themes and tasks for the 'social services practitioner' an expanding assistant type role within social services in Wales
- The Welsh-language task force in Health and social care set up by the Welsh Assembly Government has recently been investigating the availability of services in Welsh in the sector. The Care Council (SfC&D) is contributing evidence to and working with the task force. The Welsh Assembly Government is also currently jointly commissioning research with Care Council for Wales in order to gain a range of evidence from service users and carers about this issue which has not been available previously.
- The Council's 'Confidence in Care' campaign this year is designed to raise the awareness of service users and carers and of sector workers specifically of the Codes of Practice.

- There have been several initiatives, including the development of a social networking site to explore the issues, and a North Wales based programme of sharing information between workers and service users. These will be evaluated shortly.

### Skills for Health

Skills for Health is the Sector Skills Council for health

#### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- Technology and advancements in treatment.
- Aging Workforce: With significant proportions of the workforce due to retire over the coming years, replacing these skills and experience will be a significant challenge.
- Economic: The tightening of public sector spending will increased demand for overall numbers of employees at the technical levels 2-4.
- ICT will continue to develop and provide major opportunities for the development of services for those working at all levels of the health sector. Data management and navigation themes are highlighted as key ICT issues for the sector.
- Developing capacity and capability of the volunteer workforce: there will be a greater focus on healthcare being provided in the community and a greater emphasis on localism, plurality of provision, and ongoing development of the volunteer workforce.
- Political: the development of the sector is also affected by the involvement of government policies throughout Wales.

#### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- Assistant Practitioner Roles: There will be a wide range of roles developed at the Assistant Practitioner level. These roles are commonly described as sitting just underneath many of the clinical roles such as Nursing and other forms of registered practitioners. Assistant practitioner type roles are often aligned to one or a number of specialisms within health care, therefore a variety of technical skills would be required.
- There are a range of generic skills essential for many roles across the sector, these include Team Working, Customer Handling, Problem Solving and Oral Communication
- Literacy and Numeracy Skills: Issues around numeracy and literacy are found across the workforce despite the high qualifications profile in the sector.

#### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Workforce Modernisation/transformation workshops/events across Wales - to introduce employers to the principles of designing and delivering large scale workforce change and the tools and resources available to support workforce redesign and the development of new roles.
- Continuing development and promotion of web-based tools to support workforce redesign.
- Specialist workshops and events across Wales to promote apprenticeships both to employers and potential entrants.

- Development and promotion of specialist tools and resources to support employability - both to school leavers and the long term unemployed (The “Employability Toolkit”).
- Development and promotion of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance materials in partnership with key stakeholders in Wales (CIAG strategic partnership).
- Bespoke research and LMI investigating skills gaps and priorities within Wales - as agreed with WAG, health employers and key stakeholders.

### Skills for Justice

Skills for Justice is the Sector Skills Council covering employers, employees and volunteers working in the Justice, Community Safety and Legal Services sectors.

#### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- The sector in Wales is broadly similar to that across the UK with a concentration of small organisations within the Community Justice element of our sector, and larger organisations such as in Policing and Law Enforcement.
- Justice and Safer Communities are central to the political and social environment in the UK and affects individuals’ quality of life, sense of well-being and security. In addition, the existence of a safe and low crime environment is critical to the UK economy. A wealth of diverse organisations in the sector, although operating to individual remits, work towards the same broad purpose - the creation and maintenance of a safe, just and stable society.
- The Welsh Assembly Government sees improving the delivery of public services through planning, procurement and delivery as a key priority and this is clearly outlined in strategies such as ‘Making the Connections’, ‘Learning for Public Service Delivery’ ‘One Wales’ and the Beecham review.
- Changing legislation does impact on skill needs and currently services and agencies need to ensure they offer a citizen-focussed service delivery.

#### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

The key development areas identified by all agencies within the sector are:

- Leadership and Management skills;
- Multi agency working,
- Equality and Diversity knowledge and skills

#### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Skills for Justice is leading the development of a European Leadership and Management project with a cross section of employers in Wales.
- Facilitated and co-ordinated action learning sets across the justice sector and by creating a sustainable pool of facilitators to deliver Action Learning Sets,
- Developed and implemented a multi-agency training programme, ‘Joining up Justice’ which was aimed at improving the quality of multi-agency working skills within the Justice sector.

### Skills for Logistics

Skills for Logistics is the sector skills council for the freight logistics and wholesaling sector

#### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- EU legislation directly affect workforce skills requirements
- EU, UK and Welsh Carbon/energy Policies will require new technologies and skills
- Economic climate directly affects the volume of transport demand
- Sector image and age demographics will lead to the loss of experienced individuals
- Technological advancements aimed at improving efficiency are a key skills driver
- Consumer demand is a key driver and new skills will be needed to meet rising customer expectations.

#### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- Customer service skills: drivers are now much more customer-facing
- Health and Safety: required across all occupations to ensure compliance
- 'Green Skills': across all occupations
- Planning and administrative skills
- Appropriate licences/certificates: i.e. driving licences, Driver CPC, Transport Managers CPC, ADR and Dangerous Goods Safety Advisor, Lift truck operations
- Management and leadership

#### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Promoting Apprenticeship awareness to employers.
- Developing a generic Logistics Apprenticeship.
- Undertaking research to assess the demand for, and viability of, a driver simulator.
- We work closely with Careers Wales to promote the sector at Careers events.
- We have undertaken a collaborative pilot with *GoSkills* on Literacy and Numeracy aimed at the driver elements of our footprints.
- Promoting non driving qualifications to employer i.e. traffic office and customer service
- We are planning a collaborative project with *GoSkills* to improve the market penetration and impact of Wales based training providers.
- Working with Cranfield University, who are developing a behavioural assessment for LGV drivers and interventions to improve LGV driver skills and safety.

## Skillset (Creative media)

Skillset is the Sector Skills Council for Creative Media

### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- Wales policies: The industry is being driven by the Welsh Assembly Review of the Creative Industries (March 2010), the Welsh Assembly's Economic Renewal Programme (2010) and the Hargreaves' review of the Creative Industries in Wales (2010).
- Innovation is a major driving force especially the need to join creativity and entrepreneurialism; Introduction of new technologies e.g. High Definition and 3D created skills gaps.
- Globalisation: Welsh Creative Media operates in a global marketplace offering many opportunities.
- Growth in Welsh Television Production: the BBC has committed to doubling TV network production from Wales by 2016.

### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

The Skillset sector is possibly unique in the rate of development and adoption of new technologies. Consequently it needs a large range of specialised technical staff. The list below gives examples:

- Digital convergence skills: the need for multi-skilled staff who understand multi-platforms.
- New technologies: Skills for High Definition and 3D technologies, digital convergence, CGI: 3D/Animation/VFX/Graphic design skills.
- Other specialist production related skills: including technicians, riggers, electricians, unit nurses, and line producers. Demands for archiving skills and Stereo 3D and Nuke software skills are growing.
- Photo Imaging: Digital Technology, Digital workflow and Management of Digital Assets.
- Web editing: acknowledged skills gap amongst the Publishing workforce.
- Advertising sector: skills shortages and gaps amongst Capable Creative Technologists.
- Media: Researchers with journalistic and investigative skills.

### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Skillset Cymru Training Framework (SCTF) commissioned Cyfle to deliver a series of technical courses addressing HD, File Based Production and 3D. More technical courses along these lines will be funded by the Framework and delivered by Cyfle in 2011.
- SCTF in 2011 will commission Cyfle to deliver a 6 month training programme with intensive archive training and work placements within the independent sector, ITV and BBC.
- SCTF will also be funding DV Talent to run an Ideas Generation and Innovation course in relation to multi-platform productions and will fund Cyfle to deliver the Ultimate

Researcher, an intensive 4 week course conducted over a period of 6 months for those currently working as researchers.

- Skillset Cymru is currently offering bursaries to Editors and Post Production specialists to attend training of their choice. These bursaries are funded by S4C and TAC.
- It is also currently offering freelance bursaries to address some of the skills areas identified above and is funding PACT to deliver a global formatting skills masterclass for the independent TV sector via the Enterprise Networks Discretionary Fund.
- Skillset have offered bursaries for courses in Nuke, Maya and 3D skills run through Escape Studios.

## Skillset (Fashion and Textiles)

Skillset is the Sector Skills Council for Creative Media.

### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

- Globalisation: Lower wages overseas, sophisticated logistical technology and remote design capabilities have driven the outsourcing of production.
- Diversification and the rise of technical textiles: Traditional textile manufacturers are moving into technical textile markets, servicing end user markets such as automotive, aerospace and medical.
- Fast fashion: Firms have to be responsive to the demands of the customer and retailer. Supply chains now see cases of a lag of just 15 days between initial design and items being stocked in store.
- Sustainability agenda: EU legislation has impacted use of raw materials, transportation costs, waste and water use. Conversely employers use sustainable and ethical credentials to market their goods.
- Technological advances: The sector has been influenced greatly by computer aided design (CAD) and computer aided manufacturing (CAM), as well as advances in supply chain technology and the ability of employers to sell directly from source using e-commerce.
- Sector image and an ageing workforce: The fashion and textiles sector in Wales has a poor image with potential entrants. Only the design sector is seen as attractive. Consequently the sector has an ageing workforce with many employees possessing difficult to replace tacit skills nearing retirement.
- The British Style: There is a premium for British produced goods and services in domestic and world markets. Firms are focused on export markets and exploiting this demand for British and Welsh produced goods with an increased focus on marketing and branding.

### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

The 2008 Fashion and Textiles employer survey highlighted how 61% of employers in Wales felt they would encounter skills shortages if looking to recruit.

Specific potential skills shortages include: sampling, textiles process, garment technology, design, sewn products, pattern cutting, garment alterations, shoe repair, handcraft garment

making, textile and fabric technologists, leather goods manufacturing, footwear technology and carpet fitting.

### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- A new apprenticeship framework for fashion and textiles is currently being developed for employers in Wales for each of apparel, textiles, tailoring, laundry and dry-cleaning services.
- 14-19 manufacturing and product design diploma introduced into the Welsh Bacalaureate.
- Development of a Wales course directory that highlights fashion and textiles training provision.
- Hosted a forum for Welsh fashion and textiles employers to identify and prioritise management and leadership issues in collaboration with the SSA findings to take forward.

## Skillsmart Retail

Skillsmart retail is the Sector Skills Council for retail

### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

The economy is the key driver for the sector. This drives consumer confidence and as a consequence their spending patterns. In response this drives retailers to change their behaviour to achieve greater productivity by:

- Sourcing goods at a better price which may mean changing suppliers, driving down factory gate prices or buying from the worldwide commodity markets e.g. coffee
- Investing in technology such as self-service tills, tap and go, iPhone 'apps', m-commerce,
- Operating through more, or possibly fewer, channels to market
- A second, but just as important, driver is that of customer expectations. Customers are more knowledgeable because of the internet and demand higher levels of service. This includes the very real issue of online goods delivery.

### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

- For store-based staff such as sales assistants, sales supervisors, departmental managers the most needed skills are:
  - selling skills
  - service i.e. customer handling skills
  - product knowledge
  - team working

### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- The National Skills Academy for Retail is being extended to cover Wales. We anticipate 4 retail skills shops being developed by Dec 2011. One is already in place. These skills shops will provide fit-for-purpose training to local retailers which is either subsidised by WAG e.g. apprenticeships, or is marketed on a full cost recovery basis.
- New retail courses in this category have been developed for delivery by the skills shops with Mary Portas and WorldHost. The WorldHost courses cover service, selling and the supervision of sales teams.
- We are conducting, with other SSCs, a bespoke research on the Welsh food supply chain called 'Gate to Plate'.
- We have conducted Location Models in Rhyl and Newport.

## Summit Skills

SummitSkills is the Sector Skills Council for the building services engineering sector.

### What are the main drivers of technical skills in your sector?

Generally demand in the Building Services Engineering sector is driven by consumer needs. However, Welsh companies surveyed by Summit Skills in 2009 highlighted five other drivers for maintaining and updating the technical skills of their staff:

- Complying with regulations (26%)
- Industry-specific skills needs - in Wales the greatest need appears to be for electrical engineers (19%)
- Installation of environmental technologies (15%)
- Energy conservation (14%)
- Health and safety (11%)

### What are the specific technical skills/occupational needs?

Building services engineering companies tend to have strong technical, practical or job-specific skills needs. It should be noted however that the sector has always been unfocussed in defining its skills needs and this has been the case for many years.

Generally there are two skills that they have been identified by Welsh companies as important, albeit at low levels:

- IT skills: the acceleration of technologies in communication, information/data retrieval, interpretation and application of technical data, has lead to a skills gap in this area. Companies are looking to make systems more cost-effective and efficient, and are switching to on-the-spot invoicing and data logging via operatives using hand held terminals and laptops.
- Oral communications skills: to interact appropriately with customers

### What action is your SSC taking/planning to take/would like to take in order to address these technical skills issues in your sector in Wales?

- Influencing consumer demand is outside the remit of SummitSkills. However we will continue to seek to influence the Government and other organisations capable of influencing consumer demand in Wales, and monitor and advise the sector on technical skills demands emanating from this.
- SummitSkills will continue to support and develop the qualifications structure for the sector, and work with partners, stakeholders and providers to encourage the sector in Wales to engage in training to upskill their workforce.